



**ATTACHMENT 2: CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS,
SERIAL NUMBER 10/692,057 (KELLY)**

This attachment includes a complete listing of all claims ever presented, including the text of all pending and withdrawn claims, in this application.

CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A lifting system, designed and suited for lifting a rocket having at least one rocket engine to atmospheric heights before said rocket engine is ignited, comprising:

a. at least one inflatable buoyant vessel designed to be filled with helium or hydrogen;

b. a liftable tank-holding subassembly, comprising at least one pressurized tank suited for holding helium or hydrogen, and at least one pump or compressor coupled to at least one hose, said pump and hose being capable of partially deflating at least one inflatable buoyant vessel, with means for coupling said tank-holding subassembly to at least one inflatable buoyant vessel;

c. at least one winged aircraft, having at least two rotatable wings affixed to opposed sides of said winged aircraft and having at least one aircraft engine mounted to each of said rotatable wings and capable of generating upward thrust when the rotatable wings are positioned vertically, and forward thrust when the rotatable wings are positioned horizontally;

d. means for suspending said winged aircraft beneath said tank-holding subassembly and for releasing said winged aircraft from said tank-holding subassembly;

e. means for both (i) suspending a rocket from the lifting system, thereby allowing the rocket to be lifted into the atmosphere by the lifting system, and (ii) releasing the rocket from the lifting system, once the lifting system and the rocket

have reached a suitable altitude during a launching operation.

2. (Currently amended) A lifting system of Claim 1, comprising:

- a. an array of dirigibles;
- b. a tank-holding component which holds at least one tank that can contain pressurized gas;
- c. a winged aircraft having at least two aircraft engines mounted on each of at least two rotatable wings; and,
- d. means for both (i) suspending a rocket from the winged aircraft, (ii) releasing the rocket from the winged aircraft, once the lifting system and rocket have reached a suitable altitude during a launching operation.

3. (Currently amended) A method of lifting a rocket and launching it from an elevated altitude, comprising the following steps:

- a. suspending a rocket from a winged aircraft having at least two rotatable wings with at least one conventional aircraft engine mounted to each rotatable wing, wherein the winged aircraft is suspended beneath at least one inflatable buoyant vessel that is designed to be filled with helium or hydrogen;
- b. rotating the rotatable wings into a vertical position;
- c. using lifting power provided by the winged flightworthy structure with its wings and engines, and by the inflatable buoyant vessel, to lift the rocket to an elevated altitude, prior to igniting the rocket engine; and,
- d. releasing the rocket from the winged aircraft.

4. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein the winged aircraft is used to establish a forward flying speed before the rocket is released.

5. (New) The lifting system of Claim 1, wherein at least one inflatable buoyant vessel is provided with internal frame

components that enable controlled deflation of said buoyant vessel, in a manner that will establish an altered external shape for said inflatable buoyant vessel, to facilitate controlled descent of said inflatable buoyant vessel after a winged aircraft and a rocket suspended beneath said winged aircraft have been released from said inflatable buoyant vessel.

6. (New) The lifting system of Claim 1, wherein means are provided for releasing said winged aircraft from said liftable subassembly comprising a pressurized tank for holding helium or hydrogen, after said lifting system has reached a suitable altitude during a launching operation and while a rocket remains suspended beneath said winged aircraft.